(c) and (d) Stowing is being resorted to in the mines of CIL as per requirements / stipulation and being inspected regularly by mine officials as well as officials of the Directorate General of Mines & Safety (DGMS). However, when due to certain constraints, stowing is not completed upto the permissible limit, coal extraction is kept suspended till the stowing is completed.

The following steps are being taken by CIL and its subsidiaries for improvement in stowing:—

1. Efforts to augment sand winning from river bed and their transportation to stowing plants.

2. Stocking of sand in suitable places during the dry seasons so that the same can be utilised during rainy season when constraints in sand winning takes place due to flooding.

3. Checking of hydraulic gradients, stowing plants etc. and renovation, if required.

4. Regular supervision by mine officials.

5. Maintenance of records for stowing and its verification with quantity of coal extracted.

Even in respect of open-cast mines, filling of the void and greening of the area are taken up as per the environmental management plans approved.

Contract given to private companies for open-cast mining at Ledo Colliery Centre

625. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister to COAL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that CIL through its NE coalfields has entrusted three Private contractor companies to carry out open-cast mining at Ledo Colliery since 1984;

(b) if so, the details of clause-wise protective measures as provided in the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, taken;

(c) the extent of damage caused to the forest and natural topography, vegetation and wildlife vegetation, drinking water and cultivable land; and

(d) the total hectares of land utilised for open-cast mining operation since inception and land subsequently reclaimed and made fit for vegetation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL AND MINES (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) Hiring of heavy earth moving machinery (HEMM) from established private contractors through tendering is being done for removal of overburden and carbonaceous shale at Tirap near Ledo Colliery of North Eastern Coalfields since 1984-85. At present three contractors are operating at Tirap.

(b) Under various clauses of Rule 27 of the Mineral Concession Rules
framed under the Mines and Mineral (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 following measures are being taken:—

(i) Reclamation of mined out areas through back filling, construction of check dams, contour terracing for regarding of OB slopes, laying of top soil for plantation and broadcasting of seeds.
(ii) Mine water being treated at effluent treatment plant and the treated water is released after conforming to ISI 2490 standard.
(iii) All equipment are being maintained properly to prevent air & noise pollution and regular water spraying is being done to prevent dust to control air pollution.
(iv) 35 hectares area where coal extraction has been completed has been converted into a recreation centre (Ledo valley recreation centre patkai stadium) by developing pisciculture, lake with boating facility, plantation, stadium etc.

AH other measures as stipulated in chapter V of Mineral Conservation & Development Rules, 1988 under Mines and Mineral (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 are also being taken for protection of environment.

The measures adopted by NEC are being regularly inspected by officials of State Pollution Control Board, Assam and Ministry of Environment and Forests.

(c) The area had scanty growth of vegetation. Due to mining operation, original topography & vegetation have been disturbed. However, all steps are being taken for restoration of the area to the nearest original topography as soon as mining operation is over. No wild life has been disturbed. Monitoring of drinking water in the nearby area / villages reveals no pollution. Nearby cultivable land measuring around 54 hectares got degraded earlier due to silt flow from dumping area. This has duly been compensated.

(d) Since inception, arount 135 hectares area has been utilised for opencast operation at Tirap. Forty Five hectares has so far been reclaimed.